Where can I find more on West Nile virus?

Human Health
Washington State Department of Health
www.doh.wa.gov/wnv

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm

Insect Repellent Use and Safety
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect_repellent.htm

Outdoor Workers
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/westnile/recout.html

Equines, Other Livestock, Poultry
Washington State Department of Agriculture
www.agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/AnimalHealth/Diseases/WestNileVirus/default.htm

US Department of Agriculture
www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/wnv/

Information Lines
Olympia Area
360-236-3980

Washington State Toll-free
1-866-78VIRUS

CDC Toll-free (TTY)
1-866-874-2646

Washington State Department of Health

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For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY 1-800-833-6388).

WEST NILE VIRUS

Do you know what's biting you?

1-866-78VIRUS

What is West Nile virus?

West Nile virus is a serious illness that can affect people, horses, birds, and other animals. It first appeared in the United States in 1999 on the East Coast. Since that time, it has spread rapidly across the country. In Washington, the first cases of people becoming ill from West Nile virus were reported in 2006.

How is it spread?

West Nile virus is almost always spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected after feeding on birds that carry the virus. West Nile virus is not spread by direct contact with infected people or animals. As we learn more about West Nile virus, we may discover other routes of infection. For more information, visit the health-related sites listed on the back of this brochure.

Who is at risk?

Anyone can become infected. People over 50 years of age have the highest risk of serious illness.

What are the symptoms?

Most people who are infected with West Nile virus will not get sick. About 1 in 5 people infected will have mild symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches. Even fewer, about 1 in 150 people infected, will have more severe symptoms. Severe symptoms may include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and coma. If you have any of these symptoms, contact your health care provider.

What are public health agencies doing in Washington state?

State and local health departments:

- Monitor for West Nile virus by identifying and testing mosquitoes.
- Track the number of dead bird reports.
- Collect specific species of dead birds for testing.
- Notify health care providers to look for and report symptoms in patients.
- Notify veterinarians to look for and report horses and other animals with signs of West Nile virus.
- Distribute information on the virus and how to control mosquitoes.

These efforts are designed to identify West Nile virus before an outbreak. Public health officials will alert communities about measures that they can take to control West Nile virus.

For the latest on West Nile virus in Washington, visit *www.doh.wa.gov/wnv*

How can I protect my family?

There is no human vaccine for West Nile virus. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid mosquitoes. Take these steps to avoid mosquito bites and reduce the places where mosquitoes live and breed around your home.

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- ☐ Make sure windows and doors are "bug tight." Repair or replace screens.
- ☐ Stay indoors at dawn and dusk, if possible, when mosquitoes are most active.
- ☐ Wear a long sleeve shirt, long pants, and a hat when going into mosquito-infested areas, such as wetlands or woods.
- ☐ Use mosquito repellent when necessary. Read the label and carefully follow the instructions. Take special care when using repellent on children.

Don't Give Mosquitoes a Home

- ☐ Empty anything that holds standing water—old tires, buckets, plastic covers, flowerpots, and toys.
- ☐ Change the water in your birdbaths, fountains, wading pools, and animal troughs at least twice a week.
- ☐ Recycle unused containers that can collect water—bottles, cans, and buckets.
- ☐ Make sure roof gutters drain properly; and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- ☐ Fix leaky outdoor faucets and sprinklers.

Can West Nile virus affect my pets?

West Nile virus can cause serious illness in horses and donkeys. Though most horses do not get sick, about 1 in 3 horses that do get sick will die. To protect your horses ask your veterinarian about the West Nile virus vaccine for horses. Follow the same steps as above to reduce places where mosquitoes live and breed near horse pastures and barns. It is rare that West Nile virus will cause illness in dogs, cats, and other animals.

What should I do if I find a dead bird?

West Nile virus infects certain wild birds. Crows, jays, ravens, and magpies tend to become sick and die from infection. Increasing numbers of dead birds may be an indication of West Nile virus in your community. You can help by reporting dead crows and other birds to your local health department, environmental health program. Look in the phone book under County Government–Health. Certain dead birds will be tested to monitor for West Nile virus.

While there is no current evidence that you can get West Nile virus from handling dead birds, avoid bare-handed contact. Use gloves or double plastic bags to place the carcass in a garbage can.

What is an effective mosquito repellent?

Repellents that contain DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus are the most effective. Products come in lotions, creams, gels, sprays, and towelettes. With any of these products, read the entire label carefully before using and follow the directions. Do not over use repellents.

Washington State Department of Health

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If you have questions, contact:
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Sincerely,
Health Education Resource Exchange Web Team

PRINTING SPECIFICATIONS

Title:	**Do You Know What's Biting You?** **West Nile Virus Brochure**
Size:	14 x 8.5
Paper stock:	80# text gloss white
Ink color:	Black and Pantone Orange 021
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